

Jewelers' Building
15-19 South Wabash Avenue
Chicago
Cook County
Illinois

HABS No. ILL-1049

HABS
ILL,
16-CHIG,
51-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Washington Planning and Service Center
1730 North Lynn Street
Arlington, Virginia

JEWELERS' BUILDING

HABS
ILL,
16-CHIG,
51-

Location: 15-19 South Wabash Avenue; Chicago, Cook County, Illinois.

Present Owner: Russell Tyson, et al.

Present Occupant: 17 South Wabash Restaurant Inc., Huey Blue Print Co.

Present Use: Restaurant on first and second floors; offices on upper stories.

Statement of Significance: The building is an example of the early work of Adler and Sullivan. It is one of several structures in Chicago's Loop that were designed by the firm for Martin Ryerson, who was then one of the city's foremost businessmen.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Legal description of the property: Lots 1, 2, 3, and 4 in Block 1 of B. F. Carver's Subdivision of Sublots 7 and 8 in Wright and Sherman's Subdivision of Lots 2 and 3 in Block 1 of Fractional Section 15 Addition to Chicago.

The following is based on the chain of title recorded in Book 461, p. 12, in the Cook County Recorder's Office: The property appears to have been owned by Henry Fuller and wife, as of May 10, 1872 (Document 29976). Martin Ryerson secured the entire parcel of land for the building in a series of transactions involving the following parties: Albert M. Billings, Benjamin F. Carver and wife, Jesse Whitehead, the heirs of Henry Fuller, and Mathew Laffin and wife (Documents 323188 - 323192). The property remained in the Ryerson family for several years, being recorded in the following inventories: Martin Ryerson, November 16, 1887 (Document 46P102); Mary A. Ryerson, March 26, 1907 (Document P93/137); and Martin A. Ryerson, June 28, 1933 (Document 318/360). On May 27, 1946, the Northern Trust Company sold the property to George J. Julin, Martin H. Julin, Margaret A. Samaras, and Mary J. Fraps (Documents 13804639-13804642). They in turn transferred the title to Russell Tyson et al. on February 3, 1948 (Document number not available). The last entry in the book, dated January 29, 1964, names 17 South Wabash Restaurant Inc. as leasee.

2. Date of erection: 1881-82.
3. Architect: Adler and Sullivan.
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: There is no record of the original permit for the building.

"The building is five stories and 1 basement high."
/Frank A. Randall, History of the Development of Building Construction in Chicago (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1949), p. 95./

"A second structure built for Martin Ryerson in 1881-82, is known as the 'Jewelers' Building.' It is much smaller than the Revell Building, with five stories and a frontage of only sixty feet, but is essentially the same in its interior iron construction and its exterior design. The decorative panels of the attic and the top cornice are much more sober and restrained than in the Revell Building."

/Hugh Morrison, Louis Sullivan, Prophet of Modern Architecture (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1935), p. 60./

"The former Jewelers' Building, constructed between 1881 and 1882 at 15-19 South Wabash Avenue, is free of the spiky ornament of the previous building /Rothschild/, but the variety of openings and details in the facade betrays the absence of a clear goal in Sullivan's mind. (Fig. 7). The over-all pattern of the main elevation, however, is derived from the system of construction: two brick piers close to the end walls divide the building into two narrow bays and one wide bay at the center.¹⁷"

¹⁷Shortly after the opening of the Jewelers' Building, Sullivan was commissioned to design the exhibition cases and background partitions for a silver exhibit in Chicago. The ornamental pattern was the subject of a laudatory notice in the Revue des Arts Decoratifs (Paris, 1883) and thus brought Sullivan his first international recognition.

/Carl W. Condit, The Chicago School of Architecture (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 39./

From the Chart Showing Cost of Buildings, 1879-1895, by Adler and Sullivan, an original manuscript in the Burnham Library in the Art Institute of Chicago:

1881, M. Ryerson, 134 Wabash

Cubic contents:	767.880
2. Masonry	.0169
3. Carpentry	.0197
4. Struct.-Iron	.0266
6. Pris. Lights	.0026
9. Cut Stone	.0132
10. Fire Proofing	.0046
11. Concrete or Asph.	.0012
13. Plastering	.0045
15. Sheet Metal	.0002
16. Roofing	.0006
17. Plg., Gas & Sewers	.0019
18. Boilers & Tanks	.0078
19. Heating Appar.	
23. Elevators	.0079
29. Misc. Elec. Work	.0008
31. Painting	.0015
32. Plain Glass	.0036
41. Iron doors and shutes	.0032
Entire B'ldg.	.117

Total Cost \$90,260.46

5. Alterations and additions: The first floor has been completely altered with the installation of the restaurant facilities, signs, etc. The building has received necessary mechanical modernizations.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The building is primarily identified with the names of the architects, Adler and Sullivan, and their frequent patron, Martin Ryerson. It is generally thought that Sullivan's work on the Jewelers' Building led to his 1883 commission to design an exhibit of silver work. This design subsequently brought him acclaim in Paris, the first international recognition received by the young architect.

C. Sources of Information:

"Chart Showing Costs of Buildings, 1879-1895, by Adler and Sullivan." Original manuscript in the Burnham Library in the Art Institute of Chicago.

Condit, Carl W. The Chicago School of Architecture. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964. p. 39, Fig. 7.

Connely, Willard. Louis Sullivan as He Lived. New York: Horizon Press, Inc., 1960. pp. 99, 127.

Morrison, Hugh. Louis Sullivan, Prophet of Modern Architecture.
New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1935. pp. 60, 295.

Randall, Frank A. History of the Development of Building Construction in Chicago. Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1949. pp. 95, 269.

Prepared by Larry J. Homolka
Historian
National Park Service
J. William Rudd
Supervisory Architect
National Park Service
August 1964

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The building is an example of the early work of Adler and Sullivan. It is one of several structures in Chicago's Loop that were designed by the firm for Martin Ryerson, who was then one of the city's foremost businessmen.
2. Condition of fabric: Fair. The exterior has been extensively remodeled on the first floor, and the interior on floors one through four.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Approximately rectangular, 83' (west front) x 340'; five stories.
2. Wall construction, finish and color: Deep, red brick with extensive red terra-cotta ornament at window heads. An original terra-cotta pier remains on the north wall of the first floor, just to the east of the remodeled first floor west front. Adjacent to this north wall is a narrow alley.
3. Structural system, framing: Masonry bearing walls, on north and south walls. This span is reduced by the addition of two sets of wooden beams and columns - one near the south wall, and one near the north wall, making the two outer bays smaller than the center bay.
4. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: All have been extensively remodeled.

- b. Windows: Second floor windows have been removed and openings filled with wood. (These windows are now stored on the 5th floor.) All other windows, third through fifth floors are one-over-one-light, double-hung sash.

5. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Flat, built-up.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Terra-cotta cornice with decoration.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: Storage.
- b. First floor: Restaurant, Drug Store and entrance to upper floors.
- c. Second floor: Private club with dining rooms.
- d. Third and fourth floors: Offices and work rooms, Huey Blue Print Company.
- e. Fifth floor: Vacant, used as storage.

- 2. Stairways: Public elevator on south wall near front with new stair adjacent. Original stairs have been replaced.

- 3. Flooring: Wooden.

- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Painted plaster.

- 5. Lighting: Electrical.

- 6. Heating: Central.

D. Site:

General setting and orientation: The building, facing west on Wabash Avenue, is in the center of the block between Madison and Monroe Streets on east side of Chicago's "Loop".

Prepared by J. William Rudd
Supervisory Architect
National Park Service
August 1964

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
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Data pages 1 through 5 were previously transmitted to the Library of Congress. This is data page 6.

INVENTORY OF PHOTOGRAMMETRIC IMAGES

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- 4 5" x 7" glass plate negatives (2 stereopairs) produced by
Perry E. Borchers of the Ohio State University in 1967.

One survey control contact print per plate; survey control
information for each pair.

LC-HABS-GS05-T-4210-101L *	WEST FACADE FROM FIFTH FLOOR ACROSS STREET, WEST FRONT--LEVEL
LC-HABS-GS05-T-4210-101R	WEST FACADE FROM FIFTH FLOOR ACROSS STREET, WEST FRONT--LEVEL
	Left and right overlap: 90%
LC-HABS-GS05-T-4210-102L *	WEST FACADE FROM FIFTH FLOOR ACROSS STREET, DOWN 18 DEGREES
LC-HABS-GS05-T-4210-102R	WEST FACADE FROM FIFTH FLOOR ACROSS STREET, DOWN 18 DEGREES
	Left and right overlap: 95%

PROJECT INFORMATION STATEMENT

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